

Remarks

Favorable reconsideration of this application, in view of the above amendments and in light of the following remarks and discussion, is respectfully requested.

Applicants respectfully request entry of this response, as the response places the application in clear condition for allowance, or alternatively places the claims in better form for appeal. Specifically, Applicants have amended independent claims to overcome rejections. Upon entry of this response, Claims 2, 4-7, 18, and 21-29 are currently pending in the application; independent Claims 2, 18, and 21 have been presently amended.

Initially, Applicants express thanks for the Examiner's indication that Claims 4-7 are allowed.

In the Office Action, Claims 2, 18, and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Japanese Publication No. 6-263280 to Kawano. Claims 2, 18, and 21-29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Japanese Publication No. 6-156782 to Fukube. Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of the claims be withdrawn for the following reasons.

In response to the requirement for information under 37 C.F.R. § 1.105, Applicants respectfully assert that such items are unknown.

As stated above, Applicants have amended independent Claims 2, 18, and 21. Applicants respectfully assert that support for the changes to the claims is self-evident from the originally filed disclosure, including the original claims, and that therefore no new matter has been added.

The present invention is directed to sheet feeding apparatuses, image forming apparatuses, and sheet feeding methods. Independent Claims 2 and 18 recite at least one driven gear disposed on a cantilever shaft, the at least one driven gear having a first set of adjacent teeth separated by a first gap and a second set of adjacent teeth separated by a second gap less

than the first gap. At least one driving gear is adapted to engage and to drive the at least one driven gear. A reverse roller is pressed into contact with a feed roller, the reverse roller supported on an end of the cantilever shaft and adapted to be rotated in a sheet feeding direction and a reverse direction and to separate and convey sheet media held between the feed roller and the reverse roller. Independent Claim 21 recites feeding sheet media between a feed roller and a reverse roller pressed into contact with the feed roller, the reverse roller adapted to be rotated by a driven gear and to separate and convey the sheet media held between the feed roller and the reverse roller. The driven gear is engaged with a driving gear, the driven gear having a first set of adjacent teeth separated by a first gap and a second set of adjacent teeth separated by a second gap less than the first gap.

As stated in the English language abstract, Kawano is directed to a sheet carrying device. As shown in Figures 1a and 1b, for example, of Kawano, a driven gear 8 of a reverse roller shaft 4 is arranged so as to move slidably freely as well as to rotate integrally with the reverse roller shaft 4. A gear guiding and fixing member 40 is arranged to change a position of the driven gear 8.

However, Applicants respectfully assert that Kawano does not teach the claimed features of a driven gear having a first set of adjacent teeth separated by a first gap and a second set of adjacent teeth separated by a second gap less than the first gap as recited in independent Claims 2, 18, and 21. Rather, Applicants respectfully assert that Kawano shows that sets of adjacent teeth on the driven gear 8 are separated by gaps of a same size, for example.

Specifically, independent Claims 2 and 18 recite “the at least one driven gear having a first set of adjacent teeth separated by a first gap and a second set of adjacent teeth separated by a second gap less than the first gap.” Independent Claim 21 recites “the driven gear having a first set of adjacent teeth separated by a first gap and a second set of adjacent teeth separated by a second gap less than the first gap.” Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of

independent Claims 2, 18, and 21 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) in view of Kawano be withdrawn.

As stated in the English language abstract, Fukube is directed to a feed paper separating device. As shown in Figure 1, for example, of Fukube, a driven gear 8 is driven by a gear 9.

However, Applicants respectfully assert that Fukube does not teach the claimed features of a driven gear having a first set of adjacent teeth separated by a first gap and a second set of adjacent teeth separated by a second gap less than the first gap as recited in independent Claims 2, 18, and 21. Rather, Applicants respectfully assert that Fukube also shows that sets of adjacent teeth on the driven gear 8 are separated by gaps of a same size, for example. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of independent Claims 2, 18, and 21 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) in view of Fukube be withdrawn.

Applicants respectfully assert that the outstanding grounds of rejection of independent Claims 2, 18, and 21 have been overcome for the above reasons. Thus, Applicants respectfully request the allowance of the independent claims.

Dependent Claims 22-29 are allowable for the same reasons as the independent claims from which they depend, as well as for their own features. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of dependent Claims 22-29 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) be withdrawn and the dependent claims allowed.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment, no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application, and the present application is believed to be in condition for formal Allowance. A Notice of Allowance for Claims 2, 4-7, 18, and 21-29 is earnestly solicited.

Application No. 09/928,311
Reply to Office Action of October 9, 2003

Should the Examiner deem that any further action is necessary to place this application in even better form for allowance, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned representative at the below listed telephone number.

Please direct all future communications to this new address.

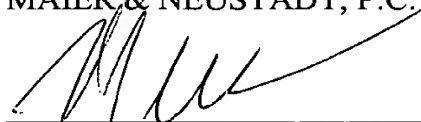
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Respectfully submitted,

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1-09-04

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